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U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Easements: Natural Resources Conservation Service Announces Total Enrollment of 5 Million Acres

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The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (“NRCS”) issued an April 2nd news release stating that it has:

... partnered to protect more than 5 million acres of wetlands, grasslands, and prime farmland — an area the size of New Jersey.

The protection is provided by NRCS partnering with private landowners through conservation easements.

The NRCS conservation program originated through authorization by the Farm Bill 28 years ago. It is administered through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (“ACEP”). ACEP enables landowners, land trusts, and other entities to protect, restore and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

The Agricultural Land Easements component of the ACEP assists American Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations in protecting working agricultural lands and limits non-agricultural uses of the land. Further, the Wetlands Reserve Easements component of ACEP enables NRCS to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.

NRCS states that agricultural land easements (including grassland easements) total more than 1.9 million acres. Wetland easements are stated to total over 2.8 million acres nationwide.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded [here](#).